

**Statement for the Record**  
**Senator Richard Burr**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**  
**VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**Nominations Hearing**  
**July 19, 2017**

CHAIRMAN ISAKSON, RANKING MEMBER TESTER and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present my views on pending nominations under consideration by the Committee.

Today you will be considering a slate of nominees to serve on behalf of veterans. I support that entire slate of nominees and I wanted to specifically comment on four of the nominees who I have had the pleasure of working with across the years as either my staffers or as persons involved in service to veterans in my state.

Thomas Bowman has been nominated to be the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. When I was Ranking Member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Tom ably served on my staff and I found him to be a highly competent and able manager of policy and staff. His background as a veteran was a tremendous asset. I know he will continue to serve our country and veterans well in this new position.

Brooks Tucker has been nominated to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Brooks served in my personal office and on my Veterans' Affairs Committee staff. Brooks was on the frontline of many challenging constituent cases and difficulties with the federal government impacting my home state. His background as a retired Marine and as a Congressional staffer will give him keen insights into the needs of both Members of Congress and their constituents in order to navigate the labyrinth of the federal government and care for our veterans.

Amanda Meredith has been nominated to serve as a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Amanda worked for me when I was the Ranking Member of the Veterans Affairs Committee. Her knowledge of veterans issues was encyclopedic and I confess I still have not released her from service. My office continues to call on her for her expert analysis of a broad range of veterans issues. She will be an outstanding judge. She knows the law, she knows the agency, and she knows the importance of making sure veterans receive the benefits they qualify for under the law.

Finally, James Byrne has been nominated to be General Counsel for the Department of Veterans Affairs. James is listed as a Virginian in his paperwork – but I’m pleased to claim him as a home-grown North Carolinian. He comes highly recommended from those who know him well and he has worked on charitable endeavors important to North Carolina. In addition to his military and legal background, he volunteered for the past ten years on the Executive Board of Give an Hour, a non-profit organization providing complimentary and confidential mental health services to veterans, servicemembers and their families.

I look forward to the confirmation of these fine nominees. Our veterans need them in place and the sooner we have them in place the better we can fulfill our promises to our nation’s veterans.

I thank the Committee for taking up these nominations and for their commitment to filling important positions. Finally, I thank our nominees for their willingness to serve. Veterans have honored us with their service and we honor them with the nomination of these dedicated public servants.